REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are presented for examination. Independent claims 1, 9 and 18 have been amended to more clearly define the claimed invention.

Claims 1-10 and 14-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Suzuki (6,330,239). Dependent claims 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki in view of Nagami et al. (5,822,319).

Claim 1, as amended, recites a method of switching digital information packets between network nodes, including forming a digital Internet Protocol (IP) information packet having an IP header including a first portion allocated for service-related fields and a second portion allocated for IP address fields; the second portion comprising at least one of the following fields:

a Packet Number field for indicating whether the packet is the first packet in a chain of packets, or a generic packet for a specific purpose;

at least one virtual connection identifier;

a Quality of Service (QoS) field for identifying parameters of Quality of Service;

a management field containing a management message; and

a security field for indicating security parameters for providing security of packet transmission.

Claim 9, as amended, recites a packet switching system for switching digital information packets, comprising:

a packet identifying unit for identifying an incoming IP packet to determine a virtual connection identifier and a type of digital information carried by the incoming IP packet having an IP header including a first portion allocated for service-related fields and a second portion

allocated for IP address fields, the virtual connection identifier being arranged in the second portion of the incoming packet; and

a path selection unit responsive to the virtual connection identifier for selecting a path suitable for the determined type of the digital information.

Claim 18, as amended, recites a communications system comprising a switching mechanism for switching a digital IP information packet having an IP header including a first portion allocated for service-related fields and a second portion allocated for IP address fields by selecting paths suitable for digital information carried by the packet, based on a virtual connection identifier arranged in the second portion of the IP header.

Hence, the claims have been amended to emphasize that the claimed method and system relate to switching Internet Protocol (IP) information packets. Further, the amended claims stress that the IP packet has an IP header including first and second portions. The first portion is allocated for service-related fields and the second portion is allocated for IP address fields.

Further, claim 1 recites that the second portion (allocated for IP address fields) comprises at least one of the following fields:

-a Packet Number field for indicating whether the packet is the first packet in a chain of packets, or a generic packet for a specific purpose;

-at least one virtual connection identifier;

-a Quality of Service (QoS) field for identifying parameters of Quality of Service;

-a management field containing a management message; and

-a security field for indicating security parameters for providing security of packet transmission.

Claims 9 and 18 recites that the second portion includes a virtual connection identifier.

The Examiner relies upon FIG. 7 of Suzuki for disclosing the claimed packet. It is noted that in his rejection the Examiner does not indicate that a packet's portion allocated for IP address fields includes the fields recited in the claims. Instead, the Examiner asserts that Suzuki teaches that packet allocated for IP address fields includes the claimed fields.

The present amendment emphasizes that the claims require an IP header's portion allocated for IP address fields to include the claimed fields.

In particular, FIG. 7 of Suzuki shows an IP header including fields 31 to 38. Fields 37 and 38 comprise the source address and the destination address, respectively. Accordingly, fields 37 and 38 of the Suzuki packet are allocated for IP address fields.

Reference neither teaches nor suggests that fields 37 and 38 of the Suzuki packet comprises at least one of the following fields:

-a Packet Number field for indicating whether the packet is the first packet in a chain of packets, or a generic packet for a specific purpose;

-at least one virtual connection identifier;

-a Quality of Service (QoS) field for identifying parameters of Quality of Service;

-a management field containing a management message; and

-a security field for indicating security parameters for providing security of packet transmission, as claim 1 requires.

Further, the reference does not suggest arranging a virtual connection identifier in the fields 37 and 38 of the Suzuki packet, as claims 9 and 18 require.

The Examiner relies upon col. 6, lines 17-39 of Suzuki for disclosing a virtual connection identifier (VCI).

This portion of the reference relates to IP-ATM nodes for providing exchange between IP and ATM networks. As one skilled in the art would realize, a VCI is a portion of an ATM packet. Therefore, the IP-ATM node selects a transfer destination based on a virtual path identifier (VPI) and a VCI provided in the ATM packet (as disclosed in col. 6, lines 17-39 of Suzuki).

However, fields VPI/VCI of an ATM packet are not allocated for IP address fields. Moreover, the amended claims emphasize that the claimed packet is an IP packet.

Further, the Examiner relies upon US patent 6,381,244 for disclosing a packet having VPI/VCI fields. However, this patent also discloses an ATM packet rather than an IP packet, as the amended claims specifically require.

It is well settled that anticipation, under 35 U.S.C. § 102, requires that each element of a claim in issue be found, either expressly described or under principles of inherency, in a single prior art reference. ***Kalman v. Kimberly-Clark Corp.,*** 713 F.2d 760, 218 USPQ 781 (Fed. Cir. 1983); ***Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.,*** 868 F.2d 1226, 9 USPQ2d 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989) *cert. denied,* 110 S.Ct. 154 (1989). The term "anticipation," in the sense of 35 U.S.C. 102, has acquired the accepted definition meaning "the disclosure in the prior art of a thing substantially identical with the claimed invention." ***In re Schaumann***, 572 F.2d 312, 197 USPQ 5 (CCPA 1978).

As demonstrated above, the prior art of record does not disclose that in an IP packet with an IP header having first portion allocated for service-related fields and a second portion allocated for IP address fields, the second portion includes any of the fields recited in claims 1, 9 and 18.

Accordingly, the claimed invention is clearly defined over the prior art of record.

In view of the foregoing, and in summary, claims 1-19 are considered to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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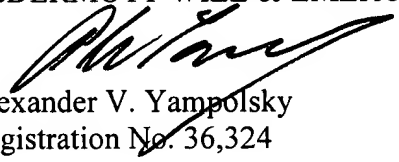

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